

**REGULAR MEETING
December 3, 2012**

The Wethersfield Town Council held a meeting on Monday, December 3, 2012 at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers, 505 Silas Deane Highway, Wethersfield.

Present: Councilors Drake, Hurley, Manousos, McAlister, Montinieri, Roberts, Deputy Mayor Console, and Chairperson Hemmann. Absent: Councilor Kotkin.

Also present: Chandler Rose, Assessor, Jackie Nichols, Vision Government Solutions, RaeAnn Palmer, Assistant Town Manager Jeff Bridges, Town Manager, and Dolores G. Sassano, Town Clerk.

Harry Lichtenbaum led the pledge of allegiance to the flag.

Mr. Chandler Rose introduced Jackie Nichols from Vision Government Solutions who is the District Manager for the State of Connecticut who presented a brief update on the current revaluation project.

Ms. Nichols explained that they are actually starting this project a little early because they are doing data mailers to all of the residential properties and are doing them in batches in order to accommodate the staffing levels at the town. She reported that they have done about 1/3 of the town so far and will pick up with the rest after the holidays. She stated that in addition to doing the data mailers we will be going through the phases of the project which will include developing a sales analysis, going through a field review to make sure that all of our sales, data and analysis is tracking properly. She explained that after October 1st when we get all of the sales that have happened, we will go through and look at the sales analysis again and finalize the numbers and send out preliminary notices in the latter half of November, at which time we will come to town if we have questions on the revaluation or on a particular property. Ms. Nichols explained that after the hearings are over, we will finalize the numbers and stated that we will be working closely with Chandler on the project and will keep you up-to-date throughout the project.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Robert Young, 20 Coppermill Rd., commented on the State deficit and the underfunded Pension Plan and urged the Council to cut our costs and not raise our taxes.

Lee Sekas, 117 Wells Rd., urged the town to be more proactive rather than reactive when it comes to snow removal on town sidewalks and roadways and stated that the town should do more patrolling after storms to make sure that town sidewalks and roadways are cleaned up properly for safe passage.

Elaine Ogren-Speranza, Church Street introduced her MiscElainEOS paintings to the Council and stated that her goal is to have these paintings known nationwide and hopes it brings attention to Wethersfield.

COUNCIL REPORTS

Councilor Manousos reported that the Redevelopment Agency met last week and discussed some of their redevelopment plan and the possibility of including the option, on the adjacent property to the new magnet school, at the CL&P building. He stated that they are working with the Town Manager to get a handle on the process and the disposition of that property with CL&P.

Deputy Mayor Console reported that the Safety Committee met on November 20th for a discussion on the fire truck purchase and the Wolcott Hill Road fatal accident. He reported that they entered into discussions with the Fire Chief and the Deputy Fire Chief and other staff members on some possibilities for replacing Truck No. 22 at Fire House 2. He stated that they are still in the discussion stages and nothing is happening yet, but will be something that needs to be looked at for our budget session next year. He stated that there will be more following with additional information. Deputy Mayor Console also reported that they had discussed whether to buy either one truck or two and commented on an article that The Town of Canton is looking to purchase two trucks instead of one with some savings and gave the article Town Manager an article to incorporate into the minutes.

Deputy Mayor Console next reported that a meeting was held to discuss the Wolcott Hill Road fatal accident. In attendance were the Committee Members and Councilors Drake, Hurley, Roberts, the Town Manager and Assistant Town Manager, the Chief of Police and the Officer that was at the accident scene. He stated that they discussed having crosswalks, flashing lights, rearranging the parking. Deputy Mayor Console then explained that after some in-depth discussions the outcome was an unfortunate accident and stated that he feels sorry for all the families affected by this and is very sorry for their loss. He reported that after a complete investigation, it was determined that it was pedestrian error and if anyone wanted to discuss this further that he and others would make themselves available.

Deputy Mayor Console stated they also addressed the stop sign on Morrison Avenue. Deputy Mayor Console stated that they are not going to add a stop sign there and they are not going to remove any signs from other nearby streets.

Mr. Bridges added that they dropped from 33 mph average speed prior to construction to 30 mph post construction so the narrowing of the road is slowing people down.

Councilor Drake stated that if people on Morrison Ave. wish to discuss this further he would make time for that.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Mayor Hemmann reported that the Council received a thank you note from the O'Connor's for the flowers that were sent for Brian.

Mayor Hemmann reported that she also received an invitation to the Webb Deane Stevens Museum Holiday Party to preview the seasonal decorations on Friday, December 14, from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m. She stated that if anyone was interested in attending, there is a nominal fee for the tickets and stated that she has an invite if anyone would like to go.

Deputy Mayor Console submitted a West Hartford article dated Tuesday, November 22 entitled Towns for People's Spending Declines which stated that the School Finance Director says students test scores continue to improve while spending has gone down \$1,851 less than the year before with increases in the mastery test scores since they were first administered in 1993.

Deputy Mayor Console reported that he was extremely impressed this year with the Town leaf pick-up crews. He stated that they did a nice job picking everything up and that the streets in town are looking good.

Councilor McAlister commented that he was surprised not to see some kind of a vote for the Wilkus Farm barns and houses on the agenda as it has been going on for months now and isn't sure why it didn't make this week's agenda.

Mayor Hemmann responded that the plan is for next agenda and that there is still some unfinished information that will be forthcoming.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

Mr. Bridges reported that the leaf pickup is now finished. He stated that the crews did every street twice and finished three days early, even with the storms, so hats off to them. He commented that as the Mayor said, they did a great job this year and were done ahead of schedule.

Mr. Bridges reported that we received a notice from the Connecticut Department of Transportation that they approved the installation plans for the traffic signal on Route 3 and Griswold Rd and stated that we will get a timeframe for installation for that but that's at Rocky Hill's request.

Mayor Hemmann asked if they were going to do site improvements because right now Waters Avenue and Griswold are not aligned but her understanding is that the request from Rocky Hill was at the corner of Waters Avenue and Maple Street because of issues that people have with that street.

Mr. Bridges replied that we will have the Town Engineer go over that at the next meeting and will have a more detailed discussion about it then.

Mr. Bridges reported that they received a \$100,000 grant to continue our study for a Regional Dispatch Facility between Rocky Hill, Newington, Berlin and Cromwell and explained that is the next step into the project planning. Mr. Bridges also reported that we received a \$150,000 for the mid-state Police Department's major crime vehicle so those are two grants that we received notice of.

Mr. Bridges reported that we redid some paperwork and we filed some additional information of the October storm and we received notice today that we are receiving an extra \$42,000 from last October's storm. He explained that, unfortunately, Hartford County did not meet their threshold for this storm for FEMA reimbursement, so we used our own crews to do the cleanup and we didn't contract any work, so we kept our costs down knowing that it would be a struggle to meet the threshold.

Mr. Bridges reported that at the last meeting, the Deputy Mayor had some questions regarding the MDC work yard on Highland St. Mr. Bridges explained that no other company other than VMS is using the site and there may be subcontractors that drop off material, but there is no other construction crew at the site. He stated that they have not expanded the work area and when they are complete, the topsoil that has been stockpiled will be restored and reseeded onsite. He explained that the excavation fill materials and trench replacement materials of both incoming and outgoing are done on a daily basis Monday through Friday and that this will continue as they shut down for winter and/or all excavation work is completed on both projects. He explained that they are not seeing an increase in materials but are seeing a decrease in the overall materials stored onsite because they are using it up quickly now. VMS says 99% of the excavation work will be completed on both projects by the end of this year. However, much of the final restoration work will have to be done in the spring. They would expect some time in June that depending on how warm of a spring we have, the property use will be drastically less active which means even when they start back up in the spring we won't see that much activity because it will be final seeding and grading.

Deputy Mayor Console reported that he received an email from MDC stating that the large dirt piles will be gone within the next two or three weeks.

OTHER BUSINESS

Deputy Mayor Console moved **"TO GO INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION AT THE END OF THE MEETING TO FURTHER DISCUSS ITEM 3a ON THE AGENDA - PENSION PLAN FOR LOCAL 2001 CSEA-SEIU (BOE CUSTODIANS UNION: AMENDMENT TO PLAN PROVISION FOR FUTURE EMPLOYEES)"** seconded by Councilor Hurley.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

Deputy Mayor Console moved **“TO APPOINT CYNTHIA RICCIO, 590 RIDGE ROAD TO THE TOURISM COMMISSION FROM 7-1-2012 TO 6-30-2013”**, seconded by Councilor Hurley.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

Councilor Hurley moved **“TO APPROVE THE THREE-YEAR COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE TOWN AND LOCAL 391, THE NATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF POLICE OFFICERS EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2012,** seconded by Councilor Roberts.

Counselor Drake asked if the overtime is spread out equally amongst all the officers?

Mr. Bridges replied that they try but some officers are not as hungry for overtime as some of the other officers.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

Deputy Mayor Console moved to **“APPROVE THE SUBORDINATION AGREEMENT FOR 174 THORNBUSH DRIVE”**, seconded by Councilor Hurley.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

BIDS

Councilor McAlister moved **“TO AUTHORIZE THE TOWN MANAGER TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH FIDUCIARY INVESTMENT ADVISORS FOR INVESTMENT FINANCIAL ADVISORY SERVICES”**, seconded by Councilor Hurley.

Mr. Bridges invited Sue Smith to give a more detailed description of the agenda item.

Ms. Smith explained that the search for the new advisor came about when we created the new OPEB Trust and then realized that we hadn't gone out to bid for the investment advisor since 2008. She explained that we did interview four firms which were Clearbrook, Beirne Wealth, Cafaro Greenleaf and Fiduciary Investment Advisor and added that the Interview Committee was made up of representatives of all three Committees, the Pension Committee, the OPEB Trustees and Firemen's Pension so it was an Ad Hoc Committee that was put together. Ms. Smith reported that FIA is clearly qualified and actually had the lowest cost overall. She commented that again, it's about low risk, high return, but they manage their funds well and now that Prudential has opened up their architecture, if you want to call it, we'll be able to invest in more and be more diverse. She explained that FIA's hands are kind of tied to this Prudential type of

investment and money managers so now under pressure from people like FIA, Prudential has opened up that architecture a little bit more so now we'll be able to do a little bit more with that.

Councilor Drake asked if the OPEB Trust and Pension Fund investment goal will be similar?

Ms. Smith responded that the goals are different for each one. So then that's how you come together, you have different goals for OPEB Trust versus Pension and that's how the Financial Advisor helps us develop the allocation strategy for us. She explained that the Pension is paying out about \$4 million a year now in Pension benefits. The OPEB Trust is going to have an investment, we are going to put money into the investment vehicles but we are not going to be taking the money out right away because right now we are paying as you go, so if it costs \$2.5 million dollars to retiree benefits now, we are just going to budget that into the annual budget and then, hopefully, take in a little bit more of the operating budget and put it into the trust every year for retiree health care, so that's one of the differences in the goals.

Councilor Drake asked if the OPEB Trust investments are going to be looking different than the Pension Fund Investments?

Ms. Smith replied they will and she believes that they are going to be looking a little more conservative.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

ORDINANCES, RESOLUTIONS, APPOINTMENTS FOR INTRODUCTION

None.

MINUTES

The Minutes of the November 19, 2012 meeting were not sent to the cloud for Councilors to review them.

They will be reviewed at the December 17, 2012 meeting along with the minutes of December 3, 2012.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Jim Clynych, 903 Ridge Rd., commented that the two grants that we received are a good thing and hopes that RaeAnn Palmer is recognized for the tremendous job that she does with the grant writing. He also commended the Town Manager on the three outstanding contracts and stated that it was a win-win for both sides. He also inquired as to when the Wilkus Farm issue will be on the agenda. Mayer Hemmann responded that it should be on next meeting agenda.

Barbara Ruhe, 79 Main St., commented that she serves as the Chairperson of the Youth Advisory Board and invited everyone to the event on Main Street this Thursday evening and that they will be having a booth and will be selling cookies and invited everyone to stop by to purchase some cookies. She stated the funds that they are going to raise from the cookies is going to be used for the fuel bank.

Gus Colantonio, 16 Morrison Ave., commented on an accident that occurred on Wolcott Hill Rd. and commented on the lack of a stop sign on Morrison Avenue.

Joel Wagner, 203 Clearfield Rd., commented that the order of bids on the Wilkus Farm property that he would consider the Nowak bid first and then the Rouquie bid because they are considering restoring the barns and the last bid that he would consider is Mr. Drisdelle because he believes it would be financially irresponsible of the town to even take that bid and commented that the only one that wins on that bid is Drisdelle. He also commented on the speeding on Wolcott Hill in front of Bliss Market and believes the speed limit needs to be lowered in that area at around 15 mph.

Robert Young, 20 Coppermill Rd., commented on how the Wethersfield School went down on the standardized testing yet West Hartford is going up and doesn't understand what our town is doing regarding this. He commented on how Hartford has received millions of dollars from the State of Connecticut and asked what do we get? He urged the Council to take the \$2 million dollars that was proceeds from the CL&P sale in town and put it into the OPEB investment fund along with some of the other surpluses in town. He commented that if we do not get the \$30 million from the State that was promised for the high school project, we should stop the project and that we shouldn't have to pick up any more than we already said that we are going to pick up.

At 8:10 p.m. Deputy Mayor Console moved **"TO ENTER INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION TO DISCUSS CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS WITH ATTORNEY PLUMB"**, seconded by Councilor Roberts.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0

At 8:20 p.m. Deputy Mayor Console moved **"TO EXIT THE EXECUTIVE SESSION AND RETURN TO THE REGULAR SESSION"**, seconded by Deputy Mayor Console.

Mayor Hemmann called the meeting back to order.

Deputy Mayor Console moved **"TO AMEND THE TOWN OF WETHERSFIELD PENSION PLAN TO ADD A NEW SUBSECTION (E) TO SECTION 1.15 WHICH WOULD EXCLUDE FROM THE DEFINITION OF 'EMPLOYEE' THOSE MEMBERS OF SEIU LOCAL 2001, CSEA, CTW (CUSTODIAN AND MAINTENANCE) HIRED AFTER AUGUST 1, 2012. FURTHER THOSE MEMBERS OF THIS BARGAINING UNIT HIRED AFTER AUGUST 1, 2012 ARE ELIGIBLE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE TOWN**

OF WETHERSFIELD DEFINED CONTRIBUTION PLAN WITH A REQUIRED PAYROLL DEDUCTION OF 4.5% OF GROSS SALARY”, seconded by Councilor McAlister.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0

ADJOURNMENT

At 8:25 p.m., Deputy Mayor Console moved **"TO ADJOURN THE MEETING"** seconded by Councilor McAlister.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

Dolores G. Sassano
Town Clerk

Approved by Vote of Council
December 17, 2012